

/36 cont./

174 separate villages and the more important even burnt out into
 613 several villages. These heads were recognized as "captains" by the
 614 great man and then by the government. The number of Djuka
 621 captains recognized by the government of Surinam has not stopped
 571 growing; it was 28 these last few years.

The lo no longer represented an effective social unit, but
 its members kept common worship. For example, it is said that
 the Dju ninge go each year as a ritual to get earth from the
 [188] Savane des Juifs /Savanna of the Jews/ where their ancestors were
 slaves.

[114] This explanation seems probable. The kin-group is not the
 only social unit known to Africans; the bond between man and
 land has equal importance in their eyes; the fact that their fathers
 had lived together, that they had been buried in the same cemetery
 created a among the rebel slaves a de facto bond which was able
 to suffice, at the beginning of the rebellion, to found villages and
 a social organization.

[114] However, this theory cannot be entertained without reser-
 vations. It has not been possible to verify it by systematic studies,
 the Djuka and Saramaka having firmly opposed until now any
 ethnographic investigation involving the statement of genealogies
 and the inventory of the population of the villages.

[184] It contradicts what we have pointed out among the Boni.
 In that group six great lineages are counted, of which four (Dju,
 Kotika, La Paix, Dikan) have a name also alluding to the planta-
 tions from which their ancestors fled.

Nevertheless it is certainly a question of lineages in the
 proper meaning of the term, and nobody remembers that any other
 organization ever existed. Also, in the absence of systematic
 studies of the Djuka and Saramaka, the problem of the origin of
 [184] their kin groups remains obscure. The future will permit verify-
 ing one or the other of the two hypotheses:

/197 cont./

711 The rites of the worship of Odun are known only by the
[243] grand man and by an old man who replaces him when he travels.
[259] They are practiced only on the occasion of the collective oath
against wisi, renewed every two or three years, and when it is
[113] necessary to implore Odun's mercy toward an offender. The
officiant bathes the latter's body with a maceration of leaves
that he alone knows.

783 To question Odun and know whether he pardons, they
781 make use of a sacred object named afalaku, placed on a board
[118] out on the heads of two men. The answers yes and no are
deduced by interpretation of the movements of the bearers,
as in the interrogation of the dead.

685 The oath before Odun is also practiced as a legal test,
permitting a man unjustly accused of theft or any misdeed
whatever to justify himself.

Thus, in November, 1959, B... of Asisi, accused by two
Dyaka of being responsible for the burning of a large cabin
/carbet/ in which objects of value were stored, asked to justify
himself before Odun.

691 Odun's laws, which have the effect of forbidding violence,
691 vengeance, and every form of oppression, give to the society
591 of the Refugee Blacks a unique atmosphere of dignity and
serenity which is not found to the same degree in animistic
African societies. Most African societies censure sorcery and
murder, but they accept vengeance and various forms of
oppression. It is probable that the men who, two or three
centuries ago, deep in the forests of Surinam, developed these
laws, were inspired more or less consciously by Christian
ideas; but they introduced them into an African system of
thought, associating them with the idea of material sanctions
in the present life, without which they would have been powerless.

/201 cont. /

791 teacher and who teach a small group of disciples - kineki -,
789 without distinction of villages or lineages and under their sole
[794] responsibility; each one, man or woman, is absolutely free to
pursue his teaching.

/202/ These teachers are not themselves possessed, but they are
believed to know the processes which permit the neophyte to
obtain possession with the minimum of risks. They accept the
[796] fact, however, that that involves dangers, for one cannot oblige
a particular gadu to come into someone, and one may in its
place obtain an undesirable gadu.

791 Procedures vary according to the categories of gadu sought.
789 But they involve three elements which are always found in one
796 form or another:

[798] -- They begin by teaching the pupil the language of the
divinity, or rudiments at the very least (as we shall point out
further on, these languages appear to be in decline); these
lessons are private;

[824] -- On behalf of a group of pupils, the teacher prepares
infusions of certain leaves which are suited to the divinity in
question. It is thought that the god likes these plants and that
they have the power to attract it.

• [788] In certain cults it is required of the pupil to utter at the
same time formulas inviting the god to come into him. , But
this is not general; in the cult of the Papa gadu especially, the
teachers bathe the students in the greatest silence.

791 At the end of the session, the student is often asked to
789 drink a little of the infusion. One might believe that it is a
824 matter of a process having a physical action, certain plants
possibly containing hypnotic substances; but except for one
aspect of the cult of the Kumɛnti of which we shall speak later,
this does not seem true; especially about the plants believed to
attract the Papa gadu, it seems that they have received this
role because of their color or odor. Our feeling is that, at least
[562] for the Papa gadu cult which appeals more especially to women,
suggestion plays an essential part.

/206 cont. /

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[789] containing seeds). Sometimes, when a god has entered a pupil, the teacher puts the latter's passivity to the test by insulting the god with the help of the drum. The Kuminti gets angry, breaks bottles and swallows ground glass, walks in the fire, hits himself with machete blows, all without any wound resulting, they say, on the body of its bearer.

[302] These frenzied dances, whose participants completely covered with pemba (white clay) are as if hallucinated, have a bizarre aspect which is perceptible to some of the Soni themselves. They do not have any secret character and constitute, on the contrary, a fine spectacle for the village people. The spectators double up with laughter at the convulsions and strange actions which the gods inspire in those possessed. They are talked about at length /207/ afterward in the evenings, humorists imitating what they saw done there, without any fear whatever of irritating the gods.

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346 Each "teacher for Kuminti" owns a small gadu du in which are lined up the implements of the cult. One finds in general in these chapels a post crudely carved in the shape of a human bust, a block of stone, jaguar skulls, some kakxi (shrub stalks with a spontaneous double bend, thought to be the prop of spirits in the bush), and a saka (maraka), the whole sprinkled with white clay (pemba). One finds also beside the door a seat and a trough which are used for the ablutions of the pupils.

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788 While bathing his body with the infusion of leaves prepared by the teacher, the neophyte repeats, in ordinary language, a series of invocations: "Come to me, enter into me. But before entering into me, it is necessary to teach me the things of thy country; O God, when thou art in me, may I be able to dance on broken glass without its cutting me; may I be able to dance in fire without its burning me. If tomorrow someone takes a machete to hurt me, he shall not be able to come forward. If someone takes a gun to shoot me, (his weapon) must break, must not be able to take off. If someone is sick, make an Joia for him, he must recover."

776 /209 cont. /

[778]
[784] wata byi, Indians of the water. In certain spots, people have known since the time of the ancestors that there resides such a Bimuyi, whose name they know; when they pass there, they address a prayer to it while making a sacrifice of tafia.

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171 (The Bimuyi must not be confused with wata mama, the mama-of-the-water of the Creoles, a dreaded divinity but one which the Boni do not appear to worship. The wata mama lives at the bottom of deep holes in river beds and never allows her face to be seen; she sometimes abandons one of her long hairs on the rocks and he who finds it becomes rich).

776 /210/ The Bimuyi can enter into human beings, exclusively,
787 it seems, into women. They give a different gita from those
[562] of the Kuminti. The possessed person dances at the edge of the water, then swims and dives for a long time. They affirm that
[789] if its possession is sufficiently intense, the genie carries the possessed woman along to the bottom of the water, where she stays for a very long time without any harm! That is supposed to have happened especially in Ainti village to a woman named Dabusa.

Possession by the Bimuyi is not frequent. In 1952 it was known in Boni country in only three women.

[562] As for men, they may perceive these divinities in dreams and receive benefits from them. For that they go to the place
• [788]
[782] where it resides and bathe, uttering an invocation: "O god, watch over me, protect me, come to me at night when I sleep, speak to me, act so that I may not be sick, so that I may get rich." The following night, the divinity will come in a dream, demand a sacrifice (beer in general), say that it /gantsi/ the prayer.

776 The Vadn (1). These are gods much feared for their evil

1. This word is obviously a deformation of the Dahomey word vodun.

[211 cont.]

special drum is used, about two meters long and very narrow, devoid of any decoration, which is called laga dā or papa dā.

To call on her gita, the possessed woman (they are almost always women) stands, puts on a piece of cloth which she always keeps nearby and always takes along with her when she travels: this is the garment of the god; it consists of a sort of scarf crossed in front; then she throws white clay, pemba, on her feet from right to left and left to right while invoking the god. Possession is almost immediate. One sees the woman's eyes roll up and her expression become haggard. The god does not cover himself entirely with pemba like the Kumēnti, he makes himself a sort of headband on the forehead with white clay. He begins with an invocation to Masa Gadu said in ordinary language.

"Masa gadu, gi mi pimi, beka mi na pikin ofage; ala sani di mi 3 taki, na yu mu gi mi kaskiti, beka na yu abi mi kaskiti, da mi yifai gi yu."

"Masa Gadu, I implore you, for I am a humble creature; (in) all that I am going to say, it is you who will give me strength, for my strength is in you; I shall exalt you."

Next come formulas of welcome to those present, which are the exact translation of the formulas of greeting of everyday life, then songs, all in the Papa language. After about a quarter of an hour, it enters a hut and sits down, answering in ordinary language the questions of those present, always in a singing tone.

Possession by Papa gadu does not have the bestial character of possession by Kumēnti; outside of the dances, it does not involve brutish gestures or bizarre acts; the possessed woman hums softly in a shrill voice, moving with graceful gestures.

[212/ Sometimes she draws strange signs on the huts; the Boni state that that is a kind of writing, that other possessed people